

# **Status Report: Programmatic Subcommittee Work on Drainage Maintenance Activities**

December 2003 Transportation Permit Efficiency and Accountability Committee

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Reviewed by: Programmatic Subcommittee

## **Why are we here today?**

We are here to present a status report on the Programmatic Subcommittee's effort to develop multi-agency programmatic coverage for drainage maintenance work.

## **Where are we now?**

On November 6, 2003 the Programmatic Subcommittee developed a final draft Programmatic Agreement that was sent out for review with comments due December 3<sup>rd</sup>. This Agreement identifies activity descriptions and conditions for the following activities:

- Channel Maintenance
- Fish Passage Barrier Maintenance
- Culvert Maintenance
- Culvert Replacement (non-fish bearing streams)

### **Status:**

- December 3<sup>rd</sup>, comments due on final draft programmatic agreement.
- January 2004 -
  - WDFW to issue 5 year General HPA permits.
  - Corps to issue policy guidance for exempt activities from a Nationwide Permit.
  - Ecology revise WQIA

## **Next Steps**

- The subcommittee expects to incorporate comments received into the final Agreement by mid-December.
- Permit agencies will issue programmatic permit coverage for activities covered in the Agreement in January. For example, WDFW expects to issue 4 general HPA permit permits for each of the 4 activity categories. Ecology expects to revise the Water Quality Implementing Agreement. The Corps expects to establish regulatory guidance regarding clarifying that the majority of these activities are exempt from a Nationwide Permit.

## **Anticipated Benefit**

### WSDOT:

WSDOT surveyed field staff and received the following feedback regarding the benefit of these programmatic permits in terms of time and cost savings:

- Channel maintenance – The annual average frequency for this type of project is 72 times per year.
- Fish passage maintenance – The annual average frequency for this type of project is 3 times per year. However, it is expected to become more frequent as the total number of WSDOT owned fish passage structures increases. Currently, WSDOT owns 105 fish passage structures.

- Culvert maintenance – The annual average frequency for this type of project is 720 times per year.
- Culvert replacement – The annual average frequency for this type of project is 30 times per year. This estimate is only for culvert replacements conducted by maintenance forces. The subcommittee determined that programmatic coverage should only apply to non-fish bearing streams. This determination was based on the understanding that culvert replacement in fish bearing streams are very site specific in terms of design and environmental impact and would necessitate individual permit review. The subcommittee will look at expand programmatic coverage for this activity in the future.

Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission, Cities, and Counties:

The Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission (WSPRC), Cities and Counties have also participated in the review of the programmatic for work on drainage maintenance activities.

Feedback on the proposed programmatic is supported and beneficial. Cities, Counties, and WSPRC that use the proposed programmatic can likely provide at least 40% coverage of their maintenance programs. The following response from the City of Kennewick represents a typical response from the cities that provided feedback:

*Would you apply for a programmatic HPA from WDFW?*

We have used another programmatic HPA from WDFW for fish friendly aquatic projects in the past. This HPA would be useful for maintenance projects as listed in the programmatic.

*Would you apply for a programmatic HPA from Department of Ecology?*

We would encourage the Department of Ecology to strongly take the programmatic approach to streamline work like that outlined in this work. There would be no net loss of water quality to waters of the state if the general provisions were followed by local agencies.